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BACK TO THE BASICS: FINDING THE PEACE WITHIN YOURSELF

Malorie Mackey

Actress, author and adventurer

Malorie Mackey is an actress, host, and writer living in Los Angeles, CA. Malorie's first book was published in 2017 and her short story "What Love Has Taught Me" has been published in the anthology "Choices." You can find Malorie's travel content on dozens of digital media platforms. Check out www.maloriesadventures.com for more. Malorie's adventures don't just encompass physical adventures. She has been a student of intuition since she was a teenager, studying at Edgar Cayce's A.R.E. In 2019, Malorie discovered the Monroe Institute while filming her travel show. Since then, she has been studying the art and science of consciousness through many different programs and life experiences.

Sometimes, when it comes to meditation, the most important thing you can do for yourself is to get back to the basics. We all turn to meditation for a variety of reasons, but usually, a common theme (if not the purpose of meditation itself) is to find peace within ourselves. More often than not, I meditate for the sole purpose of finding my inner peace. It seems like a pretty easy concept, but I will admit that it's one that regularly gets overthought. So, I'd like to get back to the simple basics and discuss finding the peace within.

I think the most important thing to note here is that inner peace is always available. It's always a part of you; you just need to learn how to connect with it when things get hard. I find that when things are peaceful it's easy to go deep down and access it, but when a lot of stimulation and stressors are clamoring, peace becomes harder to reach. So, it's important to know that it's always there, and you can always access it—you just need to learn how.

How do you go about doing this? For me, the easiest way is to practice mindfulness, and the very basics of this come from knowing where to direct your attention. Learning how to pay attention to certain aspects of your surroundings and being present in the moment is a good way to start any meditation, and is a *great* way to find your peace. You can begin by focusing on all the sounds and noises around you, no matter how quiet or chaotic your surroundings may be. From there, after you acknowledge each of them, you can disconnect your awareness from them and focus your attention within. You can do the same with any scents or sensations that may be found around you. By learning the basics of mindfulness and acknowledging all of the sounds, smells, and feelings around you, you can shut them out and dismiss them, allowing you closer contact with your inner peace.

Once you have turned your attention within yourself, focus on your breath. Feel your chest rise and fall as slowly and methodically as possible. Live in that breath for a time. Use this as a tool to truly connect deep within yourself. Then ask yourself, “How am I feeling today?” There is no wrong answer. If you’re feeling upset, that’s okay. Acknowledge this feeling and pay attention to it. Perhaps ask yourself why you’re feeling this way. Then gently and peacefully let it go. Breathe it out, feeling it leaving you with each exhale, and release it completely.

From there, try to think of the happiest moment you’ve ever experienced in your life or some of the things that evoke your greatest gratitude. Use those personal experiences and feelings to cultivate a sense of warm joy within yourself—and *live in it*. This feeling of gratitude, at least for me, is the key to accessing my inner peace. As I soak in it, I feel my breath rising and falling, and that inner peace almost magically appears and expands. We all have something that can allow us to find happiness and peace within, and for me, gratitude is always the key.

Try to spend some time each day connected with this feeling of gratitude, happiness, and inner peace. The more you can cultivate it within yourself, the easier it is to allow it to manifest all around you throughout your life. Know that peace lies within you always, even if it’s hard to access sometimes. Also, if you ever need help to pull forth gratitude in your meditation, I strongly encourage you to download the Expand app. It’s an incredible tool that can help you connect with your breath, your spirit, and your inner peace and gratitude at any time and in any place. It’s become my favorite companion to my meditations—especially since I’m on the road more often than not—and my go-to guide whenever I need a little nudge to access the peace within.